UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/CN.10/160
3 May 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

DISARMAMENT COMMISSION
1991 substantive session
New York, 22 April-13 May 1991
Agenda item 4

OBJECTIVE INFORMATION ON MILITARY MATTERS

Working paper submitted by the Netherlands*

INFORMATION EXCHANGE: THE EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE

1. In his introductory round-up statement, Ambassador Andre Erdos (Hungary), Chairman of Working Group I on Objective Information on Military Matters, invited delegations to provide explanations on how relevant information is obtained, provided, processed and exchanged in various regional or other frameworks outside of the United Nations system. In response to this request, the 12 member States of the European Community have prepared the following description of key provisions of the Helsinki (1975), Stockholm (1986) and Vienna (1990) Documents under the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in so far as they are relevant to the task in hand for the Working Group.

2. With the aim of undertaking, in stages, new, effective and concrete actions designed to make progress in strengthening confidence and security and in achieving disarmament, the participants in the CSCE process have been able to agree on a wide range of measures which build confidence by encouraging openness and transparency on military matters.

3. It is recalled that the CSCE process is based on sovereign equality of all participating States and that the obligations freely accepted in this framework equally apply to all of them, irrespective of their size, level of economic development or military status.

---

* On behalf of the 12 member States of the European Community.

SCOPE

4. By virtue of an incremental approach, the scope of the provisions now agreed is wide. Key elements are as follows:

- Information on military forces. Participating States will provide, in a agreed format, by 15 December of each year, information on their military forces concerning military organization, manpower and major weapon and equipment systems, valid as of 1 January of the following year. Information provided may be subject to evaluation visits by other participating States on the basis of a random assessment procedure (visits on short notice to another party's units);

- Information on plans for the deployment of major weapon and equipment systems. Participating States will provide, in an agreed format, by 15 December of each year, information on their plans for the following year for the deployment of major weapon and equipment systems. Information provided may be subject to evaluation visits by other participating States;

- Information on military budgets. Participating States will exchange annually information on their military budgets for the forthcoming fiscal year, itemizing defence expenditures as set out in the United Nations reporting instrument. The information will be provided to all participating States not later than two months after the military budget has been approved by the competent national authorities. Each participating State may ask for clarification from any other participating State of the budgetary information provided;

- Annual calendars. Each participating State will exchange, with all other participating States, an annual calendar of its military activities subject to prior notification as defined by the Vienna Document, forecast for the subsequent calendar year. The calendar will be transmitted every year, in writing, through diplomatic channels, not later than 15 November of the following year;

- Prior notification of certain military activities. Participating States will give notification in writing through diplomatic channels in an agreed form of content, to all other participating States 42 days or more in advance of the start of military activities defined as notifiable by the Vienna Document;

- Compliance and verification. Where compliance with agreed confidence and security-building measures is in doubt, detailed provisions allow for inspection visits. The inspecting State will prepare a report and circulate a copy to all participating States. Inspectors will be accorded the privileges and immunities in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations;

- Observation of certain military activities. Participating States will invite observers from all other participating States to military activities involving a number of troops beyond the thresholds defined in the Vienna Document. Invitations will be in writing through diplomatic channels. The invited State may decide whether to send military and/or civilian observers. The observers will be granted the privileges and immunities accorded to diplomatic agents in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations;

- Seminar on military doctrine. From 16 January to 5 February 1990, the participating States held a seminar on military doctrine in relation to the posture, structure and activities of conventional forces with the participation of civilian and military experts. A second seminar is planned for 1991;

- Visits to air bases and other military contacts. Each participating State with air combat units will arrange visits for representatives of all other participating States to one of its normal peace-time air bases on which such units are located. To improve further their mutual relations in the interest of strengthening the process of confidence and security-building, the participating States will, as appropriate, promote and facilitate military contacts;

- Risk reduction. The Vienna Document contains provisions whereby the participating States will consult and cooperate with each other about any unusual and unscheduled activities of their military forces outside their normal peace-time locations which are militarily significant, within the zone of application for CSBMs and about which a participating State expresses its security concern.

5. The participating States will meet annually to discuss the present and future implementation of agreed CSBMs. In addition, the Council for Foreign Ministers can also discuss other CSCE security issues when they meet. The first of these meetings will take place in Berlin.

6. Many of the agreed measures will work through the recently established Conflict Prevention Centre in Vienna, which is run by a consultative committee of senior representatives of participating States.

METHOD OF TRANSMITTING INFORMATION

7. As will be seen from the above, the usual method of exchanging information is through the use of diplomatic channels, either in capitals or in Vienna. Information is generally passed individually and simultaneously to all participating States. Participating States have further agreed to establish a network of direct communications between their capitals for the transmission of messages relating to agreed measures. This network will complement the existing use of diplomatic channels.

8. Negotiations on CSBMs continue in accordance with the mandates of the Madrid and Vienna Follow-up Meetings of the CSCE.

9. The main Follow-up Meetings of CSCE will be at the level of head of State or Government every two years. The next will be in Helsinki in 1992.